DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 276 874 CE 045 989

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| TITLE | Vocational Home Economics Education. Coalition Statement I. |
| INSTITUTION | Home Economics Education Association, Washington, D.C. |
| PUB DATE | Jan 79 |
| NOTE | 19p.; For a related document, see CE 045 990. |
| AVAILABLE FROM | Home Economics Education Association, 1201 Sixteenth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036 (Publication A261-08436; price, $1.00). |
| PUB TYPE | Viewpoints (120) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS. |
| DESCRIPTORS | Change Strategies; Cooperative Planning; Definitions; *Delivery Systems; Educational Objectives; Educational Policy; *Financial Support; Government Role; Home Economics; *Home Economics Teachers; *Homemaking Skills; Leadership; National Organizations; *Occupational Home Economics; Organizational Objectives; Position Papers; Professional Associations; Professional Development; Secondary Education; *Teacher Education; Teacher Qualifications; Teacher Responsibility |
| IDENTIFIERS | American Home Economics Association; American Vocational Association; *Coalitions; Home Economics Education Association |

ABSTRACT

In May 1977, the governing bodies of three professional organizations concerned with vocational home economics education (the American Home Economics Association, the American Vocational Association, and the Home Economics Education Association) formed a coalition. Consisting of two representatives of each organization, the coalition has as its primary objective to increase communication and project a unified thrust and focus on issues related to vocational home economics education. This statement outlines the coalition's main tenets pertaining to the scope and definition of vocational home economics education. The coalition's operating guidelines are enumerated. Next, vocational home economics education is defined as education that prepares males and females for (1) the occupation of homemaking and (2) paid employment in home economics occupations. The scope and significance of the occupation of homemaking and home economics occupations are examined. Covered next are the funding and structure of vocational home economics and current funding needs. The rationale for homemaking education is discussed. Current and proposed structures for funding and developing a delivery system for vocational home economics education are set forth. The history of federal involvement in vocational home economics education is summarized. The final three sections deal with the preparation of teachers and leaders, competencies needed by vocational home economics educators, and their responsibility for professional development. (MN)

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January 1979

Publication A261-08436
Additional copies are available.
Cost: $1.00
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## COALITION OF AHEA, AVA, and HEEA

A Coalition of the three professional organizations concerned with vocational home economics education, American Home Economics Association (AHEA), American Vocational Association (AVA), and Home Economics Education Association (HEEA), was established by governing bodies of the organizations in May 1977. Each association selected two representatives. The general purpose is to increase communication and to project a unified thrust and focus on issues related to vocational home economics education.

### Purposes

The six members of the Coalition have reviewed their charge and agreed upon the following purposes:

1. Maintain continuous dialogue among professional organizations concerned with vocational home economics education.
2. Identify existing and potential issues of vocational home economics education.
3. Develop a statement regarding vocational home economics education which will serve as a baseline for the analysis of future positions.
4. Review positions on current issues relating to vocational home economics education and facilitate development of consensus among the organizations.
5. Determine various target groups to communicate issues and positions concerning vocational home economics education.

## Operation

The Coalition accepted the following assumptions as guidelines for its operation:

1. Coalition members have the responsibility to consult with the officers and staff of the organization they represent and to reflect the philosophy and purpose of that organization to the Coalition.
2. The governing board and staff of each professional organization is responsible for communicating and clarifying to each new group of officers and relevant committees the position and purposes of the Coalition.
3. The Coalition is to serve as a "clearinghouse" for policy or position statements developed by any one of the organizations.
4. Consensus on a position reached by the Coalition will be communicated to the governing boards of the three organizations.
5. When consensus cannot be reached, each organization will have the latitude to explore its own alternative position(s) with policy makers, *designating such as its own point of view* and presenting both the rationale and the reasons for differences. Such alternative positions are to be shared with other professional organizations through the Coalition.

## SCOPE AND DEFINITION OF VOCATIONAL HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATION

Vocational home economics education prepares males and females for (a) the occupation of homemaking and (b) for paid employment in home economics occupations. For the purpose of this paper, *vocational homemaking education* has been used as a generic term for programs now designated in legislation as "consumer and homemaking." Vocational home economics education is used as a more general term to include both wage earning and homemaking programs and to describe professional educators.

### Occupation of Homemaking

The occupation of homemaking requires knowledge and skills that are interrelated and necessary for optimum quality of life for individuals and families. Values, management, and interpersonal relationships are major concepts that unify the content of the subject matter areas: child and family development, clothing and textiles, foods and nutrition, consumer education and resource management, and housing. The essential skills of homemaking include (1) providing for personal and family development at the various stages of the life cycle and for establishing satisfying personal and family relationships, (2) caring for and nurturing children, (3) providing nutritious foods for self and family members, (4) selecting and maintaining housing and living environments for self and others, (5) providing and caring for personal and family clothing, (6) and managing financial and other resources. There are additional skills which some consider to be home economics content, but if such skills are not essential for the occupation of homemaking they should not be included in vocational homemaking education.

## Home Economics Occupations for Paid Employment

Home economics occupations for paid employment utilizes knowledge and skills related to the subject matter areas. The same concepts and applications basic to preparation for the occupation of homemaking are basic to the home economics occupations classified as paid employment. For example, the same basic principles are taught in foods and nutrition for the homemaker as for the food service worker; the same clothing principles can be used by the homemaker that are used in the apparel industry; the same human development, care, and guidance principles apply in child care services and the care services of the elderly and handicapped as in caring for one's own family. The difference lies in the setting, the instructional objectives, the level of competency and responsibility required, and the scope of operation. This overlap remains a strength and a link between preparation programs for paid employment and for the occupation of homemaking.

## Funding and Structure for Vocational Home Economics

Recognition of the relationship of well-ordered, quality home and family life to productive, satisfying work life is implicit, if not explicit, in the history of vocational education legislation. From the earliest legislation to support vocational education to the present, the Congress of the United States has included funding for home economics education. The funding for the occupation of homemaking implies acknowledgement of the fundamental importance of the role of family life and the functions of households to economic, social, and political well-being of our nation.

From the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, to the Vocational Education Act of 1963 and subsequent amendments of '68, '72, and '76, the legislation has evolved from a focus upon de-

veloping manpower to meet the needs of industrial and corporate society to emphasizing the human needs of persons, including the need for occupational competence. Many factors during that 60-year period affected the legislative priorities: a major depression; wars; dramatic technological changes; changes both in numbers and age proportions of the population; increased standard of living and economic security; increased numbers of persons in school and increased level of education for the population as a whole; social and governmental action to assure full and equal rights of opportunity under the law to all persons regardless of age, sex, race, or religion; and a phenomenal increase in the proportion of women entering the work force. A pervasive trend throughout this period has been the government role as intervenor to enhance the vocational education legislation reflects this trend.

## Current Needs

The federal support for vocational home economics education is needed more than ever to meet the stated and implicit goals of government and education. Although the dollar amounts funded have increased since 1963, they have not kept pace with inflation, and funding never has reached authorization levels in spite of heightened sensitivity to serious problems related to family and household functions. Homemaking functions are increasingly cognitive and complex and not likely to be learned in the contemporary home and family setting without some intervention. Boulding (1972), an economist, said that one of the greatest weaknesses in our social structure is the household decision maker's lack of skill. In traditional homes the skills were passed down from one generation to the next, but not so today. He recommended a high priority for household education.

> If we had any adequate sense of the priorities of our society, it seems to me that we would put ten

> times as much of both research and education into the area of household as we do now. (Boulding, 1972, p. 119)

With approximately one-half of all adult women in the work force, there is an unprecedented need for education of both men and women to assist them in sharing child-rearing and other family responsibilities. Now is the time for full support for vocational home economics education.

In the Federal Government there is much interest in funding to ameliorate acute family-related social problems. However, efforts tend to be fragmented and to overlook established programs and delivery systems such as the secondary and post-secondary schools. The established systems can address emerging problems effectively and at least cost in time and dollars than development of a new bureaucracy.

Home economics educators urge three governmental actions: (1) full funding to the extent authorized by law for education in the occupation of homemaking, (2) continuation of categorical funding or other legislative assurance of education for the occupation of homemaking, and (3) strengthening of the established delivery system.

### Why Homemaking Education?

The family, or household, is a major institution of society for socializing the young. In addition to its educative and protective function, the family system interacts with the other major institutions of society. If the family system does not function, then other systems such as formal education (Boulding, 1972) and the

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Boulding, Kenneth E. "The Household as Achilles Heel." *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, Winter, 1972, pp. 110-119.

business society (Boulding, 1962) will break down. Problems such as malnutrition, child abuse, consumer fraud, teenage pregnancy, energy waste, and environmental pollution, which are among our nation's most intense social concerns, all bear on the family. The habits and values of persons related to these matters generally are "caught' in the home and family context. But economic, technological, political, and social forces have resulted in changes that have increased the complexity of choice and the burden upon families to make informed choices. The family system must be supported in its role for sustaining our society.

To be fully human no one can be exempted from interdependence with other persons. Each person needs basic competencies in interpersonal skills and resource management related to home and family in order to live a satisfying life regardless of the living style chosen. With women working outside the home in paid employment, sharing of home tasks in the household is an inevitable outcome. Both men and women have been conditioned culturally to perceive homemaking as women's work. However, the competencies and attitudes necessary for homemaker roles are learned and these can and should be learned by both men and women. The increasing complexity and changing character of homemaker roles and tasks seem to require that *organized opportunities* for learning these be enhanced and expanded.

## Funding the Occupation of Homemaking

The major funds for most school programs at the present time are the responsibility of the state government. State and local funds are

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Boulding, Kenneth E. "An Economist's View." *Ethics and Business*, University Park, PA, 1962. pp. 1-14.

needed and should be used for the regular maintenance and expansion of programs. Recognizing the added cost of vocational education, states have provided supplementary funding for vocational programs including vocational home economics.

In the past, federal funds have been used to equalize the opportunities for vocational education among the states. This should be a continued goal for federal funding. However, the most important reason for federal funding is that certain national goals can be achieved best if there is federal support. National goals such as equity of entry and education for teenage parents, because of various cultural or economic histories, may not be accepted by certain states or communities. These states or communities need to be encouraged; and, therefore, federal dollars are needed to stimulate state funding. National goals related to vocational home economics education programs include such social concerns as nutritional status, well being of children, equal opportunities for minorities and handicapped, and consumer rights and responsibilities.

Home economics is unique in its need for added support at the federal level. Although the Education Amendments of 1976 define work as paid and unpaid employment, in vocational education the predominant focus has been, and is, to prepare persons to earn a living. Although the occupation of homemaking is generally accepted as being essential for maintaining the family as the basic unit of society, it is more difficult to quantify the economic work of this occupation than other occupations for which vocational training is provided. Some progress is being made in public recognition of the economic contribution of homemaking, but the educational and social contributions of the home still are not given the same value among many people as those activities which lead to a specific wage, salary or profit. Homemakers have been dis-

criminated against. It is, therefore, as much a responsibility of the federal government to provide support for this educational program as it is to provide funds for other programs designed to eliminate discrimination. One way for the nation to affirm its belief that family functions and education for family life are worthy is to continue funding consumer and homemaking education and to add incentive monies for particularly critical areas of concern.

In order for federal funds to be used to achieve national goals, some program guidance must be developed at the national level. Such guidance should be flexible enough to allow for adaptation to specific state and local needs, but there must be some assurance that the monies indeed will be used to achieve national goals.

Vocational homemaking education requires a federal-state-local partnership. The citizens of the community served by a school need to be involved in decisions related to the scope and content of the curriculum, the organization and structure of the program, the facilities to be used, and the qualifications of the teachers. However, it is difficult for local groups to assume full responsibility for these decisions because of a lack of professional expertise needed for constant evaluation and revision of programs based on new knowledge, social, economic, and political changes. State governments are being asked to assume more of the responsibility for funding local school programs and states, rather than local educational agencies, have the responsibility for setting standards for education and licensing or certifying school personnel.

### The Delivery System

All persons should have the opportunity to participate in educatonal programs which prepare them for roles of homemaking. This proposition suggests that such education

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should be provided in a number of institutions, agencies, and organizations within our society. It should be kept in mind, however, that in order to provide a continuous and regular educational program, the well-established and tested delivery systems should be used. Vocational home economics education in the public schools, including post-secondary and adult programs, is one such well-established system. School systems are the institutions in our society which still reach most people and have a continuing organized system for the delivery of an educational program. Public schools have provided and can continue to provide both specific courses and comprehensive programs for regularly enrolled students and informal education programs for youth and adults. The schools also sponsor the student organization, Future Homemakers of America (FHA/HERO), which has become a valuable vehicle for helping prepare youth for roles in homemaking and home economics-related occupations. It seems logical, therefore, to conclude that if a home economics education program is to reach all people it must be continued through the public school system.

Society generally has viewed homemaking as female's work and home economics as a field of study for females. Male students, therefore, may not be enrolled in homemaking courses and miss the opportunities for preparation in parenting, consumer decision making, and nutrition. However, when sexism is eliminated, it is possible for homemaking education courses to serve everybody. Homemaking education cannot "reach" all students when (1) facilities or number of teachers are limited, (2) the program is not truly a vocational program, but includes specific skills of interest only to a part of the school population, and (3) any group is discouraged from enrolling.

Sometimes schools have tried to provide essential homemaking abilities to all students by delegating certain aspects to "general"

education courses. For example, nutrition may be assigned to health or science courses where only the science of nutrition is taught rather than the more comprehensive approach of home economics which would include the cost of alternate nutrient sources, psychological meaning of food, and the relationship of food preparation and storage to nutrition.

## Federal Roles

Federal vocational education funding, beginning in 1917, has assisted in developing a federal-state-local district communication system which has given continuity and stability to vocational home economics education programs provided by schools. This structure has had some weaknesses and needs to be reviewed and updated constantly in order to assure that it is working effectively and efficiently. Discarding or dismantling the system, however, is not the way to improve it. This federal-state-local cooperative effort has enabled states to work together in research, needs assessment, and curriculum development; enabled teachers, teacher-educators, and supervisors to combine efforts for program development and improvement; and has established a network of communication which is used by other educational agencies and organizations to communicate with home economists.

## Preparation of Teachers and Leaders

To maintain strong programs in vocational home economics education, the teacher-educators who prepare the teachers, local and state supervisors of vocational home economics programs, and the curriculum developers for these programs must have a background of experience and training in home economics. Although team teaching of some aspects of vocational homemaking programs may use the expertise of teachers in other fields, all programs which are directed toward developing skills for the occupation of homemaking must be the responsibility of teachers with an orien-

tation to all aspects of managing home responsibilities.

The preparation of home economics educators is vital to vocational home economics education. Certain competencies, including those in general education, specialized education, and professional education, are essential for teachers and leaders in vocational home economics education. General education competencies are based upon the supporting disciplines of physical, biological, social and behavioral sciences, the arts, and humanities. The specialization competencies are derived from all subject matter areas of home economics. The professional competencies encompass knowledge and skills of the teaching/learning process.

Those individuals preparing to teach vocational home economics education should have developed the concept that all subject matter areas of home economics are interrelated and must be meshed together. This concept is essential for those who teach the occupation of homemaking since effective programs in vocational homemaking education must consider the complete realm of maintaining homes involving the *interaction* of consumer education, nutrition, food usage, clothing, care and guidance of children, management of household tasks and finances, housing, values, and interpersonal relations. Home economists who teach wage earning courses need specialized preparation and appropriate occupational experience. There must be assurances that these programs are intelligently carried out by qualified vocational home economics educators.

### Competencies Needed

Competencies in each subject matter area of home economics must be demonstrated by individuals preparing to teach vocational home economics education. Prevailing social, economic, and technological conditions in our

society which affect the occupation of homemaking demand special emphases in certain aspects of subject matter. Needs and interests of special groups should be considered in determining the present and projected competencies needed by vocational home economics teachers.

It is extremely important to know what to teach as well as how to teach. There are some basic professional competencies for vocational homemaking teachers that are similar to those for all teachers. These include fulfilling professional roles, establishing interpersonal relationships, planning a total specialized program, managing a total program, providing instruction, guiding students in personal and professional development, and using appropriate evaluative procedures.

In addition to these basic professional competencies, there are additional competencies to be effective vocational home economics teachers. These include the ability to:

- assess the needs of the people to be served through working with advisory committees, conducting surveys, and making home and family contacts
- comprehend the principles and philosophy of vocational education
- relate legislative program purposes to specific needs of the community
- integrate the subject matter areas of home economics as they relate to the occupation of homemaking
- demonstrate essential skills required by the occupation of homemaking or for specific occupations related to home economics
- direct out-of-class experiences for individual students that relate to appropriate aspects of the occupation

- integrate the activities of FHA/HERO with the total vocational home economics program to achieve the overall objectives.

## Responsibility for Professional Development

The United States Office of Education, state education agencies, colleges and universities, and professional organizations all have a role in the professional preparation and continuing development of home economics educators. The Education Program Specialist for Vocational Home Economics Education in the U.S.O.E. can help provide leadership in professional development through national and regional meetings that focus upon trends and issues inherent to teacher education. U.S.O.E. can also help provide consistency by establishing national goals for the programs.

State education agencies have been given the responsibility for establishing and maintaining standards and certification for teachers. These agencies insure that certification for teachers of vocational home economics education programs respond to state needs and state and national legislative purposes. Leadership for in-service education of teachers also is assumed by the state education agency in cooperation with colleges and universities. Local and state supervisors of vocational home economics education programs also must have input into planning and assessing teacher education programs. Therefore, it is imperative for these administrators to have an educational background and experience in home economics.

Four-year institutions of higher education should continue to provide pre-service education for teachers of vocational home economics education programs. It is the responsibility of colleges and universities preparing these teachers to employ teacher educators who have a

background of experience and training in home economics since this is the field of study which provides the expertise needed for vocational home economics education programs. Not only should comprehensive education in each subject matter area be provided in preservice education, but the concept of the interrelatedness of all home economics subject matter should be emphasized. While specialization is necessary for the teacher of home economics-related occupations, the curriculum of vocational homemaking teachers must remain comprehensive and interrelated.

Professional organizations serve to keep members up-to-date in basic professional competencies. Professional organizations provide opportunities for members to assume leadership in the implementation of legislative purposes of vocational home economics education as well as the interpretation of the program to the public.

The Coalition has been charged with the responsibility of coordinating the efforts for vocational home economics education for the AHEA, AVA, and HEEA. These organizations must be in accord with each other to project a united position to policy makers at local, state, and national levels. Such unity can have a far reaching effect upon outstanding, innovating vocational home economics education programs throughout the nation.

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Home Economics Education Association
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Washington, D.C. 20036

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